

Seed Zones & Native Plants

Native plant communities are essential to ecosystem integrity and diversity. Highways provide access to the splendors of nature as well as offer opportunities for pollinators and natural beauty within the rights-of-way. The "Operation Wildflower" program and the Surface Transportation and Uniform Relocation Assistance Act of 1987 (STURAA) initiated the use of native wildflowers and other native vegetation along the rights-of-way to enhance biodiversity to the highway environment. These programs are the framework of Idaho Transportation Department's wildflower and native habitat restoration programs.

Since 2001, ITD's native plant program reintroduced native species to thousands of road miles and incorporated native species into seed mixes and revegetation activities. Using native plants enhances biodiversity, preserves natural habitats, and restores native wildlife habitats.

In 2014, a Presidential Memorandum was initiated creating a federal strategy to promote the health of honey bees and other pollinators. The Presidential Memorandum supports the use of native plants beneficial to pollinators and empowers land managers to engage in strategies and partnerships to improve landscapes, rangelands, and forests as well as increase and enhance pollinator habitats on a national level.